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PRESIDENT CLINTON SIGNS DEFENSE APPROPRIATIONS BILL

Larson Cites Importance of Funding for F-22 Aircraft and Support for Additional Connecticut Defense Programs

WASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Congressman John B. Larson (CT-01) expressed his support of the President's decision to sign the Defense Authorization Bill today that contains funding for the procurement of the F-22 Raptor as well as additional research and development funding for the aircraft. The F-22 carries two engines that are made by East Hartford-based Pratt & Whitney.

"I am thrilled that the President has signed this appropriations bill that is vitally important to our national defense and the state," said Larson who has worked hard for the F-22 program since his election to Congress. "This legislation that the President signed today provides funding for a number of valuable defense programs that are crucial to keeping our military strong and at the same time revitalizing Connecticut's manufacturing industrial base."

In addition to pushing the F-22 program forward, Larson had also worked with his colleagues to include \$47.8 million to begin refitting several Air National Guard F-16 squadrons with new, more modern Pratt & Whitney-built engines. "This is the beginning of what we hope will be an ongoing refit program," Larson added.

The bill also includes \$2.1 billion to build 10 new F-22 Raptor and \$400 million to buy five new F-15 Eagle fighters. Finally, the bill includes \$2.2 billion for 12 new C-17 transport aircraft, each powered by four Pratt-made engines, and \$73.1 million to upgrade F-15 engines that are currently in service.

Within the First Congressional District, Chandler Evans Control Systems in West Hartford received \$4.8 million for several Army and Air Force research and development programs as well as a share of \$117 million to upgrade the Army's fleet of CH-47 Chinook helicopters. Hamilton Sunstrand received \$4 million to continue research and development on a new propeller design.

Elsewhere in the state, Sikorsky and Electric Boat programs also fared well in the bill, which

included \$614 million for research and development of the Comanche next generation helicopter program, over \$380 million for 35 Black Hawk helicopters, \$37.8 million to convert old SSBN submarines to a new SSGN configuration, and \$1.2 billion to procure a new NSSN submarine.

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